



PRINTERS NEWS

CANON GETS FRESH

Canon has announced a major autumn product refresh that includes the launch of 14 printers.

The CP600 dye-sublimation photo printer continues, but the rest of the Selphy range is to be replaced by new products. The CP510 and CP710 dye-sub have an integrated USB cable. The DS810 inkjet has a 6.4cm colour preview screen. Six PIXMA printers will replace models in the existing range. Canon claims moderate improvements in plain paper print speeds, but says that photo print speeds are greatly improved over the outgoing models. Five MFPs complete the new line-up.

The new inkjets all use Canon's ChromaLife 100 system. The company claims that photos stored in an album will resist fading for 100 years if printed on Canon paper.

HP USES ITS HEAD

HP's new Photosmart 8250 is the company's first consumer inkjet to use a permanent print head rather than its on-cartridge system. The six-ink photo printer uses separate cartridges for each colour, which supply a large, 3,900-nozzle print head with ink. HP says the Photosmart can print up to 32 pages of black text a minute, or produce a 6x4" photograph in just 14 seconds. We'll see if it can do this in a future review. The printer is available for around £160 including VAT.



REVIEW A3+ PHOTO PRINTER

HP Photosmart 8750gp

RATING ★

PRICE £386 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com

DETAILS www.hp.co.uk

This A3+ inkjet is aimed at professional and keen-amateur photographers, and is available in two models. The gp variant reviewed here costs around £70 more than the standard printer, and comes bundled with a monitor calibration device. Using this to make a colour profile for your system's display helps ensure that printed colours and brightness levels match those that you see onscreen.

Unusually for this class of printer, the Photosmart prints directly from memory cards. There's no preview screen, though, so you have to make index sheets to select a specific photo or range of prints. Selecting shots from an SD card containing more than 200 pictures involved printing four A4 sheets in our test.

The Photosmart prints with nine inks in three cartridges. The standard HP tri-colour cartridge contains cyan, magenta and yellow inks, and a blue photo cartridge adds blue, light cyan and light magenta. A third cartridge that contains black and two shades of grey helps the 8750 to produce neutral greyscale prints.

All three cartridges have a five-picolitre minimum droplet size, which is rather large compared to competitors such as Canon's iP9950 (reviewed in *What's New, Shopper* November 2004) or Epson's Stylus Photo R1800 (see *What's New, Shopper* July 2005). The Photosmart's prints seemed fine in isolation, but they were quickly shown up when compared with samples from the others.



Prints don't seem especially grainy, but they suffer from a softness and comparative lack of contrast. Detail in dark areas was poor, particularly when compared to the Epson's prints. We weren't satisfied with the finish quality on HP's high-gloss Premium Plus paper, and using third-party media reduced the intensity of black and dark colours.

Photos from the 8750 take a couple of hours to dry fully, during which time dark colours lighten and the finish becomes smoother. This makes it hard to proof a large image by printing a smaller sample first, as you have to wait for it to dry.

Long print times are likely to slow you down further. At its highest print quality, the Photosmart took 22 minutes to print a borderless A3+ image. Epson's R1800 took just 12 minutes, and is a far better choice for those serious about photography.

Simon Handby

✓ Plenty of interfaces and memory slots

✗ Slow prints just aren't up to the job

SPECIFICATIONS Nine-colour inkjet, 4,800x1,200dpi, USB, 10/100 Ethernet and PictBridge USB interfaces. **Part code** Q5746B

HOTLIST LASER PRINTER

SAMSUNG ML-2250

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £98 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.savastore.com

DETAILS www.samsung.co.uk

Samsung's ML-2250 takes a single 5,000-page-rated consumable, which is enough for 10 reams of paper; each sheet costing 1.33p to print. Print quality is excellent. This printer has 16MB of memory and a 250-sheet input cassette, so it's well specified. You can also upgrade the memory and add networking. This is a great-value printer.



SPECIFICATIONS Mono laser, 1,200dpi, 20ppm maximum speed, USB Hi-Speed interface. **Part code** ML-2250/XEU

HOTLIST COLOUR LASER PRINTER

EPSON AcuLaser C1100

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £229 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.misco.co.uk

DETAILS www.epson.co.uk

Epson's C1100 is reasonably large for a four-pass colour laser, and it's more tricky than many to set up. In our tests it came commendably close to Epson's claimed speeds, but the most welcome discovery was its superb all-round print quality. This is an excellent, inexpensive printer with reasonable running costs.



SPECIFICATIONS Colour laser, 600dpi, 25ppm mono/5ppm colour maximum speed, USB Hi-Speed interface. **Part code** C11C567001

HOTLIST MULTIFUNCTION PERIPHERAL

HP Photosmart 2610

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £174 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.savastore.com

DETAILS www.hp.co.uk

This MFP is a great all-rounder. Its scanner has no automatic document feeder, but it's fast and delivers good results. Text printing is quick, and affordable at 2.2p per page. Print and copy quality is excellent. At this price, its network port and built-in fax make it a bargain.



SPECIFICATIONS 4,800x1,200dpi print resolution, 2,400x4,800dpi scan resolution, USB, Wired 10/100 Ethernet and PictBridge USB interfaces. **Part code** Q5542B

REVIEW COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

SAMSUNG SPP-2040

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £127 inc VAT

SUPPLIER <http://uk.insight.com>
DETAILS www.samsung.co.uk

We've reviewed many Samsung laser printers in *Shopper*, but this is the company's first compact photo printer. The SPP-2040 is a stylish little device, with smart plastics and a slim LCD screen.

The SPP-2040 comes in a box that's divided into separate compartments like an iPod's. Opening it reveals a baffling exhortation to "touch the moment". The printer's main parts come in bags with matter-of-fact name tags such as 'paper cassette' and 'power adaptor'. We searched among them, but the moment had gone.

'Forever' seemed an inauspicious word to find printed on the jacket of Samsung's quick start guide, but installing the driver was painless. Dye-sublimation printers don't need to be aligned or calibrated by the user, so we were able to start printing as soon as we'd fitted the supplied 10-sheet ink ribbon.

Replacement consumables are available in 40- or 120-sheet packs of paper and ink, but neither are particularly easy to find online. Using the 120-sheet packs, each 6x4" print costs around 24p, which is very competitive. Unlike Canon's Selphy range, no other paper sizes are available.

Samsung says this printer can produce each photo in as little as 60 seconds. It didn't quite reach this speed when printing from a PC, but it did complete six test pictures in six minutes and 53 seconds. The Dell Photo Printer 540 reviewed in


Labs, Shopper

August 2005 was

about five seconds faster per print, but the SPP-2040's print quality is higher.

Because dye-sublimation prints are created by diffusion, they sometimes suffer from soft outlines. Those from the SPP-2040 are sharper than most, but we noticed a characteristic bleed in one of our test shots. Part of the subject's pale arm inherited a blue tinge before disappearing into his navy T-shirt.

Dye-sublimation prints aren't susceptible to grain, but they occasionally exhibit a subtle blockiness. This was visible in the light skies of many of our test shots, but only picky people would be likely to notice.

The SPP-2040's print quality might fall short of Epson's PictureMate 500, reviewed in *What's New, Shopper* October 2005, but it's faster, cheaper and just as easy to use. We'd recommend it as a quick photo printer to partner a mid-range digital camera, but for this price you could buy an A4 photo inkjet.

Simon Handby

✓ Fast; reasonable running costs; easy to use

✗ Slight dappling and some softness to prints

SPECIFICATIONS Four-pass dye-sublimation printer, 300dpi, USB Hi-Speed and PictBridge USB interfaces

HOTLIST INKJET PRINTER

CANON PIXMA iP1500

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £36 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.savastore.com
DETAILS www.canon.co.uk

The iP1500 is the baby of Canon's PIXMA range and does without the advanced paper handling of the more expensive models. It's a great little printer, though, producing excellent text and good photographs quickly. It's the best affordable inkjet we've tested, but like other budget devices it's not cheap to run.

SPECIFICATIONS Four-colour inkjet, 4,800x1,200dpi maximum resolution, USB interface. **Part code** 9319A011AA


HOTLIST COLOUR LASER MFP

EPSON AcuLaser CX11NF

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £582 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.misco.co.uk
DETAILS www.epson.co.uk

Multifunction peripherals based on colour laser printers aren't getting any smaller, but they're finally affordable. This hulking Epson is the best example we've tested. It has built-in fax capability, a good scanner and great print quality. It's easy to install and use, but colour prints could be cheaper.

SPECIFICATIONS 600dpi print resolution, 25ppm mono/5ppm colour maximum speed, 600x600dpi scan resolution, USB Hi-Speed and 10/100 Ethernet interfaces. **Part code** C11C588081DA



BYTE SIZE!



Our round-up of the best new gadgets and software

KEYSONIC Illuminated Keyboard ACK-5000HL

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £26 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.scan.co.uk
DETAILS www.nanopoint.co.uk

Keyboards are rarely attractive, but the ACK-5000HL is easier on the eye than most. Its low-profile keys keep the keyboard slim, while its polished black finish gives it an air of quality.

The keys are transparent and glow blue when you press the Light button. You can barely detect this delicate light under strong illumination, but when the lights go out the glow enables you to keep typing. This keyboard is one of the most comfortable and responsive models we've used. There is not much in the way of extras, though, and the only shortcut keys are for controlling your PC's volume. Still, it's an attractive and affordable keyboard.

David Ludlow


Seed of Chucky


RATING ★★★

PRICE £11 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dvd.co.uk

In this fifth instalment of the notorious *Child's Play* series, the soft-hearted progeny (voiced by Billy Boyd) of murderous dolls Chucky (Brad Dourif) and Tiffany (Jennifer Tilly) journeys to California to reunite the family and try to end their homicidal ways. Meanwhile, actress Jennifer Tilly (played by Jennifer Tilly) is making another instalment in the notorious *Child's Play* series, but decides to sleep with a director to get a part as the Virgin Mary. The two worlds collide and death, sex and voodoo insemination ensue – can Tilly's assistant Joan (Hannah from *S Club 7*) save the day? At least twice as silly as it sounds, but full of humour, gore and even some gentle satire, *Seed of Chucky* is huge fun. Extras include a decent featurette and Tilly's on-set diary.

Chris Miller




REVIEW LASER PRINTER

DELL
Laser Printer 1100

RATING ★★

PRICE £93 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Dell 08709 074574

DETAILS www.dell.co.uk

This compact mono laser printer from Dell is about as small and simple as they come. The Laser Printer 1100 weighs just 5.5kg and takes up as much desk space as a typical inkjet. It's an inoffensive milky white colour, which seems to be the fashionable hue for user-friendly devices.

Setting up the printer requires the installation of its single consumable, which combines toner and an imaging drum in one cartridge. Dell supplies a 1,000-page starter unit, so after just two reams you'll need a new one. Replacements cost £46 and will print 2,000 pages, giving the 1100 high running costs of 2.3p per page.

It's simple to open the cover on the front panel, extend the cartridge's handle and slot it into place, after which the printer is ready to go. Installing Dell's driver is quick and easy, so even novice users should encounter no problems.

Paper is stored in a tray that takes up to 150 sheets. This is uncovered, which isn't ideal in an occasionally used home printer as it allows dust to gather on the top sheet. Printed paper collects in a 50-sheet, face-down output tray. This is too short for an A4 page, but a fold-up guide keeps things tidy. It's wide enough to stop paper from curling.

The 1100 came fairly close to its modest 14 pages per minute (ppm) rating in our text tests. It printed our document test at 13.5ppm, approaching a heady 13.6ppm when printing 50 copies of our single-page letter. Printing our mixed-colour test, which contains some complex graphics, it slowed to 11.9ppm.



As we'd expect from a mono laser, the 1100 produces good-quality black text. Character outlines are sharp and smooth, and even two-point text remains well defined. Graphics aren't a laser printer's forte, though, and our greyscale test prints suffered from some banding. Photographs in particular looked grainy, and the printer's dither patterns are obvious to the naked eye.

The 1100's performance would be acceptable for a budget device, but at this price it faces much stiffer competition. For just £5 more, you can buy Samsung's ML-2250, which is much faster, can be upgraded and produces better prints, which each cost about 1p less. See our Hotlist on page 26 for details.

Simon Handby



Decent print quality; easy to set up and maintain



Initial cost too expensive; very pricy to run

SPECIFICATIONS Mono laser, 600dpi, 14ppm maximum speed, USB interface

CHOOSING A...

MULTI
FUNCTION
PERIPHERAL

A multifunction peripheral combines a printer and scanner into a single unit, and also provides copying and fax facilities. This saves desk space and also money, compared with buying two or more separate devices.

1

Basic models cost as little as £65, with specs similar to those shown in grey below. These are OK if funds and space are tight, but quality and speed will be basic, and copying and faxing may not be possible without the help of the PC

2

Spending more invariably gives you improved speed and image quality. These improvements aren't directly proportional to price, though, so read our reviews for details. Remember that running costs can outweigh the price of the unit.

3

Sheet-fed scanners handle multiple pages but flatbeds tend to give better image quality. Cheaper models make you choose one or the other, while pricier units combine both features.

4

If you'll be using the printer regularly, consider a laser rather than an inkjet model. These benefit from improved print speeds and lower running costs, and cost from around £160. You'll need to spend a lot more for a colour laser-based machine.

5

To make the most of the standalone functions, you'll want decent front-panel controls. These can vary from a single copy button to something resembling a dedicated copier. If fax is important, check that the device has a built-in modem.

6

Other useful extras to consider are memory card slots, duplexing units for the printer and/or scanner, additional paper trays and an Ethernet port to connect the device to a network.

HOTLIST INKJET PRINTER

HP
Photosmart 8150

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £124 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.misco.co.uk

DETAILS www.hp.co.uk



This printer uses HP's new ink cartridges and comes with six-ink printing as standard. The optional black cartridge printed draft text at 17.5 ppm.

This printer excels with photos, though, and it produces natural-looking prints with accurate colours. Best of all, it is equipped with PictBridge and memory card support, and has superb direct printing features.



SPECIFICATIONS Six-colour inkjet, 1,200x4,800dpi maximum resolution, USB and PictBridge interfaces. Part code Q3399B

HOTLIST INKJET PRINTER

CANON
PIXMA iP3000

RATING ★★★★★

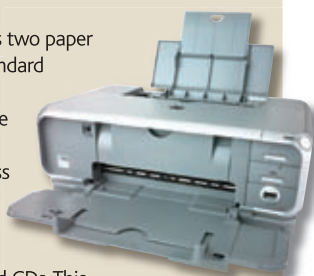
PRICE £65 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.savastore.com

DETAILS www.canon.co.uk



The iP3000 has two paper input trays, standard duplex printing and a PictBridge USB port. It prints borderless A4 photos and can even print on specially coated CDs. This is an impressive and unique set of abilities for the price, and it's also quick and cheap to run, with high print quality.



SPECIFICATIONS Four-colour inkjet, 1,200x4,800dpi maximum resolution, USB and PictBridge interfaces. Part code 9316A011AA

FILL IN YOUR SPECS HERE
(Recommended minimum in grey)

PRINT TECHNOLOGY: Inkjet

PRINT RESOLUTION: 4,800x1,200dpi

SCAN RESOLUTION: 600x2,400dpi

INTERFACE: USB

EXTRAS: